

Twenty Signals That I'm Stuck

Some people, particularly those who avoid dealing with their emotional reactions, may find themselves increasingly reliving their trauma. It may seem to them that little is resolved in the first weeks following the incident. An individual should seek professional consultation if the following reactions persist longer than a month at a level that interferes with his or her ability to function:

1. Intrusive images: distressing memories, thoughts, nightmares, flashbacks.
2. Distress at exposure to events that resemble or symbolize the event.
3. Avoidance of thoughts and emotions connected with the incident, or of activities or situations that arouse memories of the trauma.
4. Emotional numbing, or restricted range of emotional responsiveness.
5. Excessive stress reactions.
6. Hypervigilance.
7. Overreaction/under-reaction/risk taking.
8. Increased irritability, anger, or rage.
9. Obsession with the incident; thoughts of the incident are easily triggered; one seems stuck in the past and has difficulty looking toward the future.
10. The current incident can trigger feelings associated with past events. The combined emotional impact of old and new situations may seem so overwhelming that one's ability to deal effectively with any incident seems to suffer.
11. Self-doubt, guilt, second guessing of oneself. Feelings of inadequacy. Obsession with perceived mistakes.

12. A growing sense of isolation “No one understands what I’m experiencing.....I feel lost, abandoned, and different than others.”
13. Intense or sustained feeling of depression, grief, loss of control.
14. Mental confusion: Increased distractibility, difficulty concentrating or making decisions, poor judgment.
15. Development of suspiciousness in dealing with others.
16. Relationships problems-withdrawal from others, family problems, increasing difficulty with peer/supervisory/family relationships.
17. Decline in work performance-Increased absenteeism, burn-out, decline in productivity and quality of work.
18. One may have little or no noticeable initial reactions to the incident, but reactions are triggered months later.
19. Self-destructive behavior: Substance abuse, poor judgment and inappropriate decisions.
20. In rare cases, suicidal thinking may result from feelings of depression, guilt, despair, and anger at oneself.

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